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***CARDIN SAYS KENYA PEACE EFFORT IS AT A
CRITICAL STAGE; URGES IMMEDIATE U.S. AND
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT***

Encourages Bush Administration to Review African Election Program Strategies

Washington, DC – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)**, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, today sounded a warning that the mediation effort by former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, to foster a peace agreement between Kenya's opposing political parties, needs increased international support. Speaking after the Senate Africa Subcommittee's hearing on the post-election violence that has shook the east African nation, Cardin stated, "Kofi Annan's mission is a serious and difficult undertaking. The problems he is tackling are red hot and have ramifications for election in Africa."

"Mr. Annan's mission is viewed as an African solution to an African problem. But clearly, support from the United States and the international community at this time is critical to keep the parties at the negotiating table in order to find a durable solution," Senator Cardin said.

Senator Cardin also voiced his concern about how U.S. funded election monitoring programs approach elections: "Election observation and training are good tools, but they only address the back end of the cycle. This administration must look to see how it can be more effective in enhancing transparency, improving the independence of national electoral commissions and working throughout the process to improve vote tabulation procedures."